BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Wilbur Craw, 72, food broker

> *"We used to paddle surfboards up there, small kids, go on and look at the duck ponds, the rice paddies, the taro patches and we'd paddle along and look around and down and you'd see duck eggs, you swipe the duck eggs, you know what the hell for. Used to be kinda adventurous, you know, all these waterways going up all around which is all built now in highrises."*

Wilbur Craw was born in Makiki in 1914, the second of two sons born to Roy and Lily Craw. His paternal grandfather was one of the first entomologists brought in by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association to work on the industry's cane-borer problem.

As a youngster, Craw was a potential Olympic-caliber swimmer who trained with the likes of Buster Crabbe. Along with his older brother Roy, Jr., Craw was a familiar face among the beach boy crowd at Waikīkī .

After graduating from Cal-Berkeley in 1936, Craw got a job shortly after with the Bank of Hawai'i, where, by coincidence, he started work on the same day as his future wife, May Nelson.

Together with his brother Roy, they formed a food brokerage company after World War II which they still operate today.

Tape No. 13-48-1-85 and 13-49-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Wilbur Craw (WC)

April 11, 1985

Ka'a'awa, O'ahu

BY: Michael Mauricio (MM)

MM: Wilbur, can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

WC: Well, my father was an immigrant from California. (Laughs) He was Scotch and English. When he first came down here, his father (Alexander Craw) was an entomologist (who) was brought (here) by (the) HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] in (its) early years to do work with the cane borer. He was under contract and brought my father as a young boy. My father remembered Hawai'i.

Well, as he grew up he ran away from home at I guess about the age of about sixteen, seventeen and eventually became a marine engineer. He was given a run as a substitute for one of the engineers who was sick, came down to Hawai'i for the first time since his childhood and (had) that run for about five or six trips. (On) one of them in Hilo, he saw my mother who was a native of the island of Hawai'i, and being the daughter of Charles Williams who was Hawaiian and English, she was considered one of the belles of Hilo. Pop decided this was the lady for him for the rest of his life. He promptly got employment on the (inter-island) ships that were (here and) eventually they got married and settled in Honolulu. My brother Roy and I were the products of the union.

MM: What were your parents' names?

WC: My father's name was Roy Alexander Craw. My mother's name was Lily Leilehua Williams and then eventually Craw. She was born in Kukuihaele on the Honoka'a coastline. She went to the Normal School, became a substitute teacher in the [St. Andrews] Priory where she grew up as a child from a young girl to adulthood and eventually worked for the old Mutual Telephone Company. She was one of the operators. At that time, I think about seven or eight operators. The phone system wasn't too widely used. It was still growing.

MM: What year was this about?

WC: Oh, my gracious, I think that particular time it was probably about

1908, 1909, somewhere in there because when my father married my mother and they moved to Honolulu, my brother was born in 1913, and I was born in 1914 so that's about just the right time frame.

MM: You say your father was a marine engineer? What kind of work . . .

WC: Well, he was a chief. He ran the engine room on the ships. In those days, they were steam reciprocal engines. They were of English, Scotch make or design. Most of the engineers, not only on the ships, but also on the plantations, were Scotchmen. They had Englishmen, I think as the managers, and engineers as Scotchmen. (Laughs) That seemed to be the pattern that they followed.

Later on, it became pretty handy when my father decided that he was spending too much time at seas and not enough time on the land with his family. He received an offer to work for the Tidewater Associated Oil Company as a lubricant engineer. The Scotch connection helped get Tidewater greases and oils into most of the plantations and Honolulu Rapid Transit for their equipment and machinery.

MM: Where did he live during his first years with Tidewater?

WC: Well, when they moved to O'ahu, Honolulu, their first home was up in the Makiki area, upper Makiki, pretty close to the slopes of Round Top. That's where my brother was born. Then they moved down to Kalākaua Avenue. There is a section there where---I think (where) there're mahogany trees growing in the medial strip. There're little cottages as you go down Kalākaua Avenue after you turn off from King [Street], little cottages with little bridges across (a stream). It was in one of those (cottages) that I was born. Then wanting to have a more permanent place, my father and mother invested around $5,000. They bought a lot on Kīna'u Street and had a house built. Total house and lot was about $5,000 which in those days was considered a kinda of pretty fair expenditure for a young couple. So that's where we initially grew up on Kīna'u Street.

There we played with Marshall Wright whose father eventually became Mayor [Fred] Wright of the City and County of Honolulu--the job he held for many years. And Ah Tong Leong who's pretty well known in the automotive world working for Jimmy Pflueger. And "Dope" Yap of Punahou fame. Harold Yap, his nickname was "Dope" not so much that he was on dope but he had sleepy eyes so he looked dopey most of the time. (Laughs) Then there was Dwight Stein who eventually became quite an insurance executive. [He] had his own agency.

Oh, and further on down the street there was David Ai of the Ai family--his father who started City Mill, which is still going strong. Every now and then I bump into David as I patronize the home industry, and we talk about Kīna'u Street days when I'd go down there, my brother and I'd go down, Mrs. Ai would feed us and he'd come up to our house and my mother would feed him. (Laughs)

So it was one of these nice, pleasant neighborhoods.

MM: What else did the kids around there do to entertain themselves?

WC: Well, mostly we'd go hiking up to Punchbowl and then from Punchbowl we'd go through what is now Papakōlea and up into Round Top, sometimes Round Top, mostly it was Tantalus. And way up in the back of Tantalus, there were several spots that were absolutely beautiful. There was one spot that was just like a meadow. Peace and quiet up there and we'd run around, play Tarzan and (other kid games). Take our lunches and come back--pick (shampoo) ginger and whack each other on the head. (Chuckles)

MM: Shampoo gingers, you're talking about the blossom?

WC: No, the bulb before it blossoms. It was full of some sort of jellylike substance that was harmless but its kinda gooey. (Chuckles) When that stuff dried it was kinda slimey. Mostly it was hiking and exploring and finding new trails. Biggest discovery was coming across an old sort of beehive oven that some charcoal makers had erected.

MM: A beehive oven?

WC: Yeah, they put the charcoal in and fired it up and then they controlled it so that it really wouldn't burn itself out but it would turn into a charcoal that you could use somewhat like the kiawe charcoal. But they were using guava wood for their charcoal.

MM: Where was this located?

WC: Was up in the back of Tantalus. We thought it was kinda of a crazy place but then the place was loaded with guava so maybe that's how that meadow got created, chopped all the guava down. (Chuckles)

MM: How big was that oven?

WC: I'd say it was about maybe six to eight feet in diameter, and had the rounded top, like a baker's door in front, and being out in the woods, the only thing we could think of was that they made charcoal out of it when they fired it up.

MM: Were there people living up there at the time?

WC: No, that was the strange part. There were no houses around. Oh, there were a few houses along the road but nothing like it is now. They did have one place what they call the "Halfway House." I think it originally was sort of a little store, "Mom and Pop" store, but there you had a water tank that was abandoned. You could get some water out of it. It was just sort of a green shack by the side of the road. When we hit that, we knew we were halfway up to the top.

MM: Did they sell anything that you kids wanted?

WC: Oh yeah, they had a few things in it but we didn't have any money to buy it so we kinda look and, because our allowances, if I remember correctly, were about fifteen cents a week. That bought you an awful lot of see mui and crack seed and pine nuts.

MM: Where did you buy all these goodies from?

WC: Oh, right down where we lived, there were a couple of stores on the corner of Pensacola and King, there was one store. As a matter of fact, it's diagonally across from the Safeway unit. Still a business though it isn't the same store. Then there's one down by Ka'ahumanu School on Kīna'u [Street] and that corner there. There were a few little stores but that [corner] had a Chinese store and they really had the good crack seed. So mostly, it was if you wanted candy your mother made it. You'd help make the fudge and the hard candy and taffy and stuff like that.

MM: Did your mother do a lot of that kind of stuff?

WC: Oh yeah. Yep, got to, they were pretty inventive, I guess, in those days. They had to rely on using what they had and making things out of what they had.

MM: Did your mom have a job?

WC: After she got married, she stayed home and raised the kids and kept house and saved the old man's money. And believe me, I don't know how in the hell she did it, but she sure did it. (Chuckles)

MM: How about your school days? Where did you folks [go to school]?

WC: Well, my brother and I went to Punahou School up till the third grade then a series of events happened that terminated our tenure at Punahou. First of all, there was an edict that came out against having comeback balls, you know these rubber balls with a long rubber string on it, you'd throw it and it'd stretch way out and then bounce back into your hand. So that seemed to be the rage and the small boys would hit the small girls on the head with this comeback ball. They said, "No comeback balls." My brother didn't believe so he was caught hitting the gals on the head with the comeback ball. He was bounced out for, I think, about two weeks.

At the same time, I and Richard ("Peanuts") Kunihisa of the Kunihisa family out at Wahiawā, went fishing in the lily pond and we were catching the carp. Then he had to leave because somebody was picking him up so he gave me all of his fish. Then the security caught me with my fish and his fish and thought I caught all these fish and so I was relieved from school for a couple of weeks.

(Laughter)

WC: My folks got so incensed about it, they pulled us out! So we were stuck into Central Grammar School where the cultural shock was quite, quite bad. I didn't like the change so I rebelled and stayed three years in the third grade while my brother went on ahead. Oh, I guess, it was in the sixth grade where I skipped two grades and made up for the loss that I had incurred.

From Central Grammar [School], we went to Lincoln School. Then from Lincoln School to McKinley High School. From McKinley High School to University [of Hawai'i]. I'm still on the Punahou mailing list.

MM: Where is Central Grammar [School]?

WC: Well, Central Grammar [School] was just outside of town, up Queen Emma Street. Sort of up from the St. Andrews Cathedral, on the right side, St. Andrew's Cathedral. Central Grammar's up that street (on the left).

I don't know what they call it now but it was Central Grammar. [It is now called Central Intermediate School.] The principal was a Mrs. Overend and she was related to the husband of my aunt who was an Overend at that time. So she took pity on us and let us in. She was quite a strict woman. She ran that school [like a] real tight ship.

MM: Central Grammar [School], then that's opposite of St. Andrew's Priory now.

WC: Yeah, opposite St. Andrew's [Priory], that's right.

MM: About what year was this that you first go to Central Grammar [School]?

WC: I think it was about 1925?

MM: You were still in the third grade at the time?

WC: Yeah, could've been earlier. Yeah, I went to school---must have been about 1914, '18, 1919. 1919.

MM: You'd be roughly about eight or nine years old.

WC: Yeah, about eight or nine.

MM: About 1922.

WC: Yeah---let's say about '22 just for the sake of argument.

MM: From Central Grammar [School], you went to, you said, "Lincoln?"

WC: Lincoln [Intermediate School]. That was the old McKinley High School. That's opposite Thomas Square.

MM: This was for intermediate?

WC: Well, from Central Grammar [School] then down to Lincoln [Intermediate School]. Now, it's no longer a school. They had a statue of McKinley that they took and put in the front of the auditorium at (the present) McKinley High School. We used to climb up (laughs) the statue and sit on the guy's shoulders. Yeah, lordy! That's the school now that they are talking about turning it into an art center or something like that.

MM: You said that used to be the old McKinley High School.

WC: Yeah, that used to be the old McKinley High School. Then when they built the new one at its present location why they just called that one McKinley.

MM: Do you know if there was a statue of Lincoln in front of that particular school?

WC: No. That was really McKinley because at that time, I guess they didn't have enough money for a bronze statue of Lincoln.

MM: What kind of kids attended that school?

WC: Lot of Haoles, hapa Haoles. I don't know, it's kind of a funny carryover from those days but then in McKinley [High School] the Oriental kids were starting to come into it. So a lot like [the] Mirikitani boys, were in there with (us).

Lot of the people who are now retired from the State and City and County governments, we're all schoolmates. It was kind of a funny thing, you go down to some bureau and hell, he's the guy that used to be in your English class or your math class or your French class from high school. It was really sort of a cradle of a lot of these guys. Take Hung Wo Ching. Take, I think, it was Hiram Fong. All those guys all went to McKinley [High School]. Cause I was in the class there with the Mirikitani boys, good law firm now.

MM: This is what Mirikitani?

WC: I think it was Richard.

MM: Percy?

WC: Could've been Percy. No, I don't think it was---Percy.

MM: He became one senator . . .

WC: Yeah, yeah. I'm trying to think of some of the guys. Sun Leong, his family (had) that furniture store Downtown. "Mongoose" Leandro, Rusty Westcott, "Legs" Diamond, Hiram Ka'akua, (Leon Straus).

MM: "Legs" Diamond? Is that any relation to that Diamond there was a hardware store?

WC: No. You're thinking of W.W. Diamond. "Legs" Diamond was part-Portuguese. I think he was Portuguese-Hawaiian.

MM: That was his nickname, "Legs."

WC: Yeah. Then "Mongoose" Leandro.

MM: Whoa. You have a lot of nicknames for your friends, huh!

WC: Well, I didn't make 'em up, they were already named. Rusty Westcott, he was a football player. The guy turned out to be a hell of a wrestler. Then he invested all of his money that he was making into apartment houses in Hollywood. Then he got into making documentaries, films. He had a hell of a business built up. But gee, he was a rough, ornery guy.

Then there's Leon Straus who was a captain of detectives.

MM: How long did you live in the Makiki area?

WC: Oh, till about fifteen but we were always going out to Waikīkī because my cousin "Baby Mae" Cunha lived out there, right out there on the corner of Kapahulu and Kalākaua [Avenues].

(When we were ten years old) my brother and I were put into the Outrigger [Canoe Club] by "Dad" Center who was the coach because he wanted some swimmers. We were real, kinda water rats, pretty good swimmers. So I used to swim for the Outrigger [Canoe Club]. As a matter of fact, that was my sport.

I used to swim against, not against, but train with Buster Crabbe. Down at the Natatorium, I'd be swimming with Maiola and Manuela Kalili, Rose Simerson, and Maurice Furusho.

MM: Was "Dad" Center the coach?

WC: Yeah, he was the coach for the Outrigger [Canoe Club]. He and Harvey Chilton, they used to have this kinda of rivalry going on. They were the star coaches of the islands in those days. See, "Dad" Center coached Duke Kahanamoku. Trained 'em and stuff like that. So we were always down at the beach.

When we first got down there, the old Outrigger [Canoe] Club was built on the banks of the ['Āpuakēhau] stream that came out into the water between the Moana Hotel and the Seaside Hotel which is now the present site of the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel].

(Across) that stream, (a) bridge was built across Kalākaua Avenue, a low concrete bridge, almost flat with the road, then the stream went up into the duck ponds. We used to paddle surfboards

up there, small kids, go (up) and (explore) at the duck ponds, the rice paddies, the taro patches and we'd paddle along and look around. Now and then you'd see duck eggs, (and) swipe the duck eggs, (don't) know what the hell for. Used to be kinda adventurous, you know, all these waterways going up all around (and) which is all built now in highrises.

Then when we would get back down we would go fishing in the stream. They had lot of these little baby fish, I guess, you might call them "mosquito fish". Or when the stream would open up and the water would come in, it would be moi season or 'oama season, some of these fish would go up in there. Actually, some of the regular fish like manini and stuff, they became acclimated to the water. You'd see these damn manini swimming around in the fresh water!

MM: Fresh water?

WC: Yeah, it's sort of a semi-fresh but at the entrance it was more brackish, but they made the changeover. Oh, in the streams there was mullet. Oh yeah, mullet--(they'd be) swimming all over the place.

(There was a) groin that stuck out, (on the Moana Hotel side of the 'Āpuakēhau stream) that went out. To discourage people from climbing on it, they had a sharp, sharp point like that. But it didn't disturb too many people. Small kids, you know, you can get on, straddle it and keep working your way out. When the surf would get big, we could body surf along the groin coming in up the stream. It was just a big sandbar that went out, then when the surf would change it would leave all the rocks. They had a lot of limu there.

MM: What kind?

WC: Manauea and limu līpoa. Waikīkī was very famous for its limu. It had līpoa. They had manauea They had huluhuluwaena. They had, some spots there, wāwae'iole. Only thing that you couldn't find too much of and wasn't a good place for it, was lipēpē. It's crunchy, when it grows it grows flat looks like a Christmas tree. It's very crunchy, and real good tasting. Oh, boy! There's some out here but it's scrubby stuff.

MM: It's not the kala limu?

WC: Oh, limu-kala is broader leaf than the other limu līpoa. It is a coarser limu. It has almost the same taste but it is a wide, coarse limu, and for that reason, the Hawaiians don't particularly care for it. They call it limu-kala. It's the līpoa that has the fine (leaf), it's about half or one-third the width of the limu-kala, and that is the preferred limu.

Oh, in the old days, the old girls used to get out there in their

holokūs and go pick manauea all along the walls. Matter of fact, I used to help my mother. (Chuckles)

MM: How would you go out and pick this limu?

WC: Oh, it was shallow, you just looked down, see limu, (or you got a) lot by feel. Yeah, you can tell what manauea feels like. There was no such thing in those days as ogo. As a matter of fact, ogo, I'm sure it was growing, was regarded by the Hawaiians as a kinda of a scrub limu. That's too coarse, too coarse. You get that manauea, it's that red manauea, same stuff that washes up in 'Ewa Beach.

MM: Real, really dark red. How would you prepare that?

WC: Well, if you wanna make namasu-style, you gotta clean out the fine (green) limu that grows in with it every now and then. You have to clean that out, chop it up, blanch it and then run it under cold water so it doesn't cook because when it gets too cooked it gets soft and mushy. But just so you blanch it, and then you make your vinegar, sugar, ginger, (sauce) namasu-style, put it in.

Otherwise, you would chop it up, mix it with say wāwae'iole, a good mix is līpoa, wāwae'iole, lipēpē and manauea. Mix 'em all together, put it together.

MM: Toss salad, huh?

WC: Whew! Relish! We used to do it out at Diamond Head. When we first moved out there, [Waikīkī] was loaded with limu līpoa! Oh, just loaded! That young limu would come up and there was a sort of golden brown, you could see it on the rocks. That līpoa, new līpoa, tender. We'd go out and we'd be always careful to pinch it off or you took a cheap pair of scissors and cut so you don't disturb the roots.

We used to put it into flour sacks and take it out to Lunalilo Home, that's where the old Hawaiians were. Yeah, my mother used to take it out there and she used to give it to the people out there. Oh, they'd go crazy over it. And they (had) plenty. I (filled) a big rice bag [full] to take out to them.

MM: Do you feel the waters changed somewhat?

WC: Oh, yeah. The whole area changed. Soon everybody along the coastline or the hotels and (apartments) put in swimming tanks. Okay, to keep the algae from growing, they put chlorine in it. Then to save pumping it into the sewer, they drain it into the water. So as a result, the limu beds that used to be plentiful around Diamond Head, (were) all wiped out.

You get scrub limu, the stuff that can stand up. That's that

very thorny type of limu. Hard stuff. That's about all you (get) now. You can't find līpoa out at Diamond Head anymore because [of] all these swimming tanks.

When you had a lot of limu, you had a lot of fish that came in and eat. Cause I can recall where the house that we had was right on the water. The second story had a balcony that projected out over the water. When you stood on it, and looked down into the water, you could see all kinds of fish coming in.

Oh, you could see big ulua coming in. Sometimes they come in, and the water drained off the reef and they lay on their side and flap going out on their side. I'm not kidding you. I've seen it. Many times when I was out there poaching mullet in the closed season, you could see, these big ulua going out. You didn't want to throw [net] on them. They break up your net. They're too strong. Oh, yeah, they go right through your net. Bang!

MM: Even though they were on shallow water?

WC: Even though they were on shallow water because the next surge of water that came across the reef, then they'd be up like this, see. (WC demonstrates how fish would swim out.) Right through your net. So then you'd be sitting patching your net.

We would see big ulua come in, we'd see kala come in, and we'd see kala because they would be feeding on the līpoa. When the waves went by, they'd feed up like this (WC shows how fish feed upright, perpendicular to reef) and their tails would be wagging, waving in the air.

Yeah, yeah. Nighttime, especially, if there was a light on, you could see the kala come in right close to shore. They were kala about this big. (WC demonstrates size of fish with his hands.)

MM: You say you'd poach mullet during the [kapu season].

WC: Oh, yeah, when I was going to school. I was selling mullet to the chop suey houses, Lau Yee Chai's, twenty-five cents a pound.

MM: That's quite expensive then, twenty-five cents a pound. What year are you talking about?

WC: Well, you couldn't get mullet. I'm talking now about 1930 . . .

MM: When you were in high school?

WC: When I was in high school, and when I was in first-year or second-year college. We were getting spending money doing that. But when I was in college, I was playing beach boy, with Lex Brodie, and we were financing our college tuition.

MM: When did you first move into Waikīkī then?

WC: Oh, when I was, like I said about fifteen. That was in the latter part of the '20s maybe '28, around there, '27, '28. Because when the depression hit, that's when we became beach boy though we were sorta amateur beach boys before that. Only we weren't getting paid then for taking out the wahine Haoles. Free. Aloha!

(Laughter)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: You said you were first cousins with the Cunha family . . .

WC: Yeah. Oh, my mother and "Baby" Mae Cunha's, Mae Angela Cunha's mother were sisters. Sonny Cunha married my aunt. He was a composer. He was supposed to be a lawyer, but he wasn't interested in law. He was interested in music.

So that's why Sonny's father Old Man Cunha disowned him, not so much disowned him but cut his kids out of the will. He wrote, "Little Brown Girl [in a] Little Grass Shack" when he was courting her. It became quite popular. Another thing that he wrote was "Boola Boola" for Yale. That, of course, is one of the national songs.

MM: Wasn't that the old Yale fight song?

WC: Yeah, it's a football song now.

MM: You say when you were still living in Makiki, you were going out to Waikīkī to stay with . . .

WC: Well, we would visit (the Cunhas) during the day or we'd be out at the Outrigger [Canoe Club] then we'd walk down (to the Cunha home) and we'd play and get to know (people along the way). Doing that, we were lucky because then we knew a lot of the Stonewall Gang guys.

MM: The Stonewall Gang?

WC: Yeah, you see, right from, I would say from where the highrises are fronting Kalākaua Avenue [on the Diamond Head end of Waikīkī] (to Kapi'olani Park was the turf of the Stonewall Gang) . . .

MM: Queen's Surf?

WC: Yeah, Queen Surf, yeah, Kūhiō Beach, from there on down, it was a big stone wall and was nothing but rocks down below. There was no beach there. There was nothing built up.

The guys from the back streets, Monsarrat Avenue, Kapahulu [Avenue], back up in there, that was their turf. So they'd come down and they'd be on the stonewall. There were maybe a dozen or more guys, it was loosely knit and we got to know 'em. Eh, small kids, you know, we playing around, and they knew that the family was there so you were kinda accepted. So when we'd go around, we could walk around Waikīkī, no sweat! Some strangers would come down, "Eh, who you, pal?" you know, you'd get your head slapped. And those guys were pretty rugged buggers.

MM: Who were some of these . . .

WC: Oh, I've forgotten 'em. My brother has met a couple of 'em but some were surfers and some weren't. Now the Hui Nalu guys, we knew. We were right next door, we would always run over and (being) hapa Haoles, no sweat. From Fort DeRussy or way down which is now [Hīlton] Hawaiian Village, all the way up, we could go with impunity. And all the various sections, whose ever turf it was, they knew us. We were harmless types. We weren't trying to make muscles so we could get along fine! (Laughs) So that was one good thing about our life that I enjoyed because those guys were real, real nice guys except that, you know, this is "Our territory and don't muscle in!" So we never tried to, you know, throw out the chest and act tough, the hell with it! Besides too many guys and you (are) not that big! (Laughs)

MM: Could you describe Waikīkī as you walked down from Kālia towards Diamond Head?

WC: Well, Kālia in those days---say the 'Ilikai on up, there was little streets that went down (to the water). There were little, small cottages, houses people lived in. There was the Paoa family who lived there. I think, there were some Harbottles. I think that's where the Keaweamahi family lived.

They had their own communities. It was self-sufficient, very good life. It was cheap land. It was easy. They could go out fishing--plenty fish in those days. There was no development. They had like the country life right in the city. Then you got to the Fort DeRussy which was an army post, and (there were families there, some of whom had children with whom we went to school.) It was a coast artillery post--the same boundaries that they have now.

(Where Kaiser Hospital is located there was the Ikesu Tea House.) Then they had one hotel there that was an old, old hotel, but really it was more like a boardinghouse for people who worked in town.

The tourist area was up in the Moana [Hotel] because all you had from there on up then you'd get to more houses. You had a few like apartments where Roy Kelley's hotels are now. He bought them up as he expanded. Then you had the Halekūlani. Then there

were some Gray's cottages next to the Halekūlani. Then across the street was the King residence and "Fanny" who we grew up with and went to school with. His sister and my cousin were very good friends. Then you had the Youngs' house.

Then you had the Seaside (cottages) before the Royal (Hawaiian Hotel was built). They were very nice old-fashioned cottages with a lattice-work pagoda, like a small pavillion where the people gathered. They also had a bathhouse.

Then you had, (the Uluniu Swim Club), a wahines club. And (next to it) the Outrigger [Canoe Club]. Then there was this open space that became a parking lot. It belonged to the Judd Estate. Then you had the Moana Hotel with the Hui Nalu boys and the bathhouse side. Then you had another open lot. We used to play football in it.

Then you had three or four houses that finally wound up with the last house. That was the Steiner property because that had a big (deck) that stuck out over the water on two piers. The others were turned into boardinghouses. They were old estates.

Oh yeah, after that, you had the tavern with a merry-go-round bar there, Waikīkī Tavern. Then there was one boardinghouse that was still going during the war [World War II]. That's where my lieutenants who were under me used to rent rooms for the weekend. Then you had Kūhiō Beach and all across the street (were) just homes. Steiner had his house there. See, they owned on the beach, they owned across the street. That became a hotel, (the Biltmore). Canlis built his first restaurant there (before it became a hotel).

Then from thereon it was the Catholic Church and a privately-owned property that wasn't developed. Then you had Aoki's Store and the Blue Ocean Inn, [Kapi'olani] Clothes Cleaners, a barbershop and Ibaraki's Store.

In the back were all little apartments, little small dinky places, where people--the rent was, fifty, sixty dollars a month? Rent was cheap in those days. Aoki and Ibaraki was all you needed (to do your shopping).

Then there was this property between, going from those stores and then up to Kapahulu. Then on the Kapahulu corner, it was the Cunha property--great, big lovely home with a walk going (in from the street and a) big iron gate. In the back there was a garage which used to be a carriage house and that's where my cousin grew up. Across there, you were in streams, swamps. (And a small zoo where Daisy the elephant was housed.)

It was like islands, you know, dug out and in between they'd have date trees. They had a lot of pine trees growing, bordering. To get across the island, we used to roll up the pine needles, make

a raft out of them, put them in and it would get you across but by that time the damn raft was sinking!

MM: How big a raft did you have to make?

WC: Oh, about the size of this couch. Three kids.

MM: That's quite a bit of pine needles!

WC: Yeah, we'd roll up the thing and as you rolled it up, sometimes you didn't see 'em but they had centipedes inside, soon as it'd get wet, the centipedes would come up.

(Laughter)

WC: Why you'd be jumping all over hell! We'd pole ourselves across.

MM: Was it a deep stream?

WC: Went up till about here. (WC measures depth with his hands, about two feet).

MM: You could walk across.

WC: Ah, but you'd sink in the mud.

MM: How far across did you have to go before you reached the other side? Crossing the stream near Makee Island?

WC: Yeah, yeah, it was Makee Island. That way we'd walk, play around in the thing and follow the stream. Then the big deal was to go down and go to the aquarium, because right across the street from the aquarium they had these big, they had four ponds--in the middle of the four was a big fountain. Small kids, you know, you gotta be fresh, for you start fooling around and walk out on the rim. Nine times out of ten one of us gonna fall in.

Oh, boy, that water was not so fresh though they had fish in there but there was lot of overgrowth, and they didn't circulate the water too good.

But the scary thing was you go into the aquarium when it was just a lattice-type around to shade, as well as I guess, make a barrier. The exhibits, they had a big, big pool, about as big as in here. They had, I've forgotten what kind of fish and turtle they had swimming in this big pool in the center because the thing was radiated out like a spoke.

I've fallen into that damn thing about three times. Oh, you fall in, boy, you scared to death, you know you don't know what's down there gonna bite your feet. (Laughs) Cold and wet, you go home shivering.

MM: What were you doing? You were standing on the rim?

WC: Fooling around on the rim! But, it was lot of fun. Then eventually, they built the Natatorium which was the big monument and we used to hold swimming races there. That's where Harvey Chilton had his crew.

I used to swim from the Outrigger [Canoe Club] outside the surf about three o'clock in the afternoon, "Dad" Center [would] say, "Okay, Craw, I want you to swim out to Castle's [residence]. First you kick halfway out, then you swim with your arms halfway out. You get out there, you rest. Then I want you to turn around and swim in." (It was about a mile and a quarter each way. Castle's is now the site of the Elks Club and the Outrigger Canoe Club. The Outrigger Canoe Club used to be where Roy Kelley's Outrigger Hotel is now.)

Cheezus Christ, you know, you are all by yourself. Then he('d say,) "I'll send Buster Crabbe out and two of you, you swim in and I want you to keep up with him when he catches up with you." You wonder when in the hell the sonofabitch (was) coming--goddamn lonesome out there! You'd look down, boy, you know, it's deep. Your imagination runs wild and all by yourself and it's getting late in the afternoon. I never liked that. I liked somebody else, you know, two guys to be swimming. At least, you have some company.

MM: Was Buster Crabbe much older than you?

WC: Yeah. He was, I'd say, about a good ten to twelve years. He just died about two years ago. He became a health nut. And he had a big health program going. Gee, he's like this guy Jack LaLanne except that Buster's exercises were in water. You get in the pool. You do this. You do that. Here's your diet.

Jack LaLanne, you know, I mean, this guy is aerobics and every other damn thing. Buster had a troupe that would put on aquacades Buster was making out all right. Of course, he was one of the Tarzans in the movies. Handsome bugger. He and his brother Buddy, they're always fighting the girls off. Small kids, you have your tongue hanging out.

MM: How about you and your brother Roy then?

WC: When we got older, we had enough! (Laughs) One thing, I found out, girls, never run out, get in short supply. You know, they look pretty goddamn good. You get down to the beach and you see this stuff. Baby! All up here [WC points to his head].

(Laughter)

WC: Besides, you haven't got the time to go through these vast maneuvers to get loose. (Laughs)

MM: You never swam from the Outrigger [Canoe Club] to your home down at the end?

WC: No, by that time, I had more brains! I said, "The hell with that."

(Laughter)

WC: I had developed kidney trouble from exposure because I went surfing all day from eight o'clock in the morning till about four, no, not four, till about one o'clock, just out there. Then I came in, I went to football. Pau football, I went up to Punahou Tank and trained, cold water. Swam about, I don't know, forty laps, kicking forty laps, the arms forty laps. Both. Then I went up to McKinley and moved scenery for the class play. When we were through with that, I went moonlight surfing.

MM: Moonlight surfing?

WC: Yeah, at Waikīkī. The next day was another football game I went to. At the football game, I got cold chills and fever. I could hardly get the streetcar and come home. So, called the doctor. When the folks came home, there I was in bed, shaking.

They called the doctor. So he wanted a urine specimen.

He said, "Where do you hurt?"

I said, "Oh, my back, hurts like hell and I'm cold and everything."

So he says, "Well, I want you to give me a urine sample in this bottle."

Kinda like a milk bottle. Shit, when I peed, Christ, it was blood, pus, every other goddamn thing in it. He said, "You got inflamed kidneys."

They took me to the hospital and packed me in ice. In those days, no more penicillin. They packed me in ice for three days, and then I got cystoscopic exam where they go up into both kidneys and flush 'em out. And after that, I wasn't worth a damn for swimming. I couldn't improve.

MM: You were still in high school then?

WC: Yeah, still in high school.

MM: But you still spent a lot of time down at the beach?

WC: Oh, yeah, you know, that's, least you can still surf. You can still swim around. You can take canoes out. But see, I was training for the Olympics which were coming up in another two years. The Yale Swimming Team used to come down here every year, Bob Kipputh. He'd bring his team down. They'd swim in events and then, when small kids,

we'd swim against them in training all the time. When I was about ten years old, eleven years old, I was swimming 100 meters in about close to one minute flat. I was a fast little shit!

But after, I was building up, building up, building up, (and then) I got (inflamed kidneys). That was the end. Pau.

MM: No more swimming?

WC: Well, I swam but I couldn't improve. "Dad" Center, wanted me, in those days if you swam 100 meters in fifty-six [seconds] you were close to a record. Down here it would have been a record. But you figured, if I kept up my swimming by the time I hit the Olympic tryouts, I'd make the team. So that ended that.

I was just good enough as far as University [of Hawai'i] was concerned to make the swimming team and earn my letter but I knew damn well I wasn't gonna set the world on fire. I'd rather swim than go play football. I tried football, I knocked out these front teeth. (Laughs) Knocked them on (a) guy's head. (Laughs) You know, you can't play football and be a swimmer at the same time. Muscles are different. Roy [WC's brother] played football.

MM: How did you parents get hold of that Waikīkī property?

WC: Well, my uncle was interested in real estate. My folks were bankrolling him all the time. This property came up. Then he conceived the idea of going up instead of flat. So the property was about 30,000 square feet.

He drew his own plans. He put (a) driveway down and three houses in each (side). The first house was two levels, first and second floor. The second house had a sub-basement which went down about this deep. (WC measures with his hands.) So you had the basement, you had a unit. Then above you had two floors. So it was a little higher than (the first) one.

The one right on the beach had three floors. Each (three-story) house was designed to (have) four bedrooms, three baths, two-car garage and a patio which was (WC shows length) this big, almost as big as this. All within an area of about 1800 feet.

It was a most unusual concept. It was way, way ahead of its time. That was the house that we moved into. My uncle had one on the beach. My folks had one on the beach. The rest he gave to his kids. He put it into his kids' names. (Later), he just kept selling them off.

MM: Which uncle was this?

WC: Earl Williams, my mother's brother. The guy was way ahead of his times. He was in savings and loan, but he got on the wrong side of the Big Five. When he got on the wrong side of the Big Five,

they waited for their opportunity and busted him. Those days they could do it. They gang up on you and call a loan. They'd say, "Oh, yeah, yeah, we'll put it on (open account--)just keep paying. You know, no trouble."

Now there are many safeguards unless you go bankrupt. He wasn't going bankrupt except you get (leveraged) and you can't meet your (principal balance on a called loan). Well, anyway, that's what happened to the guy.

MM: Who were some of your neighbors out in that area?

WC: Esposito was one. He had the house next door. The old man who was a doctor and a lawyer. He was the first doctor and lawyer to hit the islands. He was an awesome little bugger. (He was the father of medical malpractice suits and was hated with a passion by the medical community.)

Then his son, Othello, Vincent they called him. He and I went to school together, and he and I worked at the nut house together. Cause he was small, he had the paralytic ward. I was big so they gave the violent ward. Oh, that was a hell of a thing.

MM: You talking about the Kāne'ohe State Hospital?

WC: Yeah, the nut house. Every time some of the women would get loose, you know, and they have to call up for reinforcements to go grab them, (they'd) call my ward. So either Ike Ahu or myself would have to go down and help subdue, not only catch 'em but help subdue 'em. These goddamn women. Boy, they were tough cookies.

MM: When did you work there?

WC: My senior year in college.

MM: Senior year?

WC: Yeah, that was in '36. We got the munificent sum of eighty-six dollars a month. That was pay for an attendant. Esposito, he and his partner, (at) the paralytic ward, they sent most of the guys ready to die up there so they try to keep 'em alive. Feed them sugar water, put blankets on them, heat 'em up hot water bottles because they died on your shift you couldn't leave until you took care of the body. That held up going home. So you leave it for the next guy. Kinda misery.

We had a good bunch of guys. We used to have a few guys that get off the head. I got locked in one of the cells with a guy had syphilis. That's why he was there, nutty, you know, paresis, everything. He was really violent. He was jumping up, landing on his head. It was covered with blood. So I went in, I had the key, opened the door, went in. Then one of the nuts who wasn't so damn nutty, he shut the door on me! (Laughs) I had the key

but the key wouldn't open anything from the inside!

(Laughter)

WC: So Ike had to go and get the key from the next ward. Meanwhile, this guy wanted to bite me. We were fighting in there. Shit, I had all my clothes ripped off. I was trying to keep him from biting, see? Finally, I got him down on his face, and I crossed my legs over his head, and I had his arms spread this way and he couldn't move. But up to that time, Jesus, I was a bloody mess! So I went in, after Ike came in, we put him in a strait jacket. I took a shower.

I took him down to the hospital. The hospital was pretty, uh, they were rugged. I mean, they didn't treat the patients too kindly. This damn doctor, he swabbed out the wounds, you know, all the cuts with alcohol. Well, that burns like a bastard. Then got his needle and thread and he was sewing the bugger up! Nothing numb, didn't numb anything. Christ, he turned my stomach. This poor guy, he was sitting there, you know--like you was sewing up a bag of coffee beans.

MM: Getting back to Waikīkī anyway, who else were some of your neighbors there?

WC: Oh, there was the Thurston family, Paul Thurston. He was the, I think, City and County treasurer or the State treasurer? "Rusty" Neal Blaisdell, he had a place there. Ruddy Tongg, he bought the land from Atherton Richards and put up the Seabreeze where my brother lived, had an apartment . . .

MM: Was he a long-time resident of that area?

WC: Who?

MM: Ruddy Tongg.

WC: Nah! He just came in after he made his money and bought the land from Atherton Richards and put up the building.

MM: I was just supposing because they had polo matches [at Kapi'olani Park.]

WC: Well, polo did ole Ruddy in. Because he was playing polo and he fell off his horse or his horse tripped. Ruddy landed on his head. He (has been) a vegetable ever since. (It was too bad for he was a good businessman who had many years of productive life ahead of him.)

MM: Did that take place at . . .

WC: Playing polo, yeah?

MM: Kapi'olani Park?

WC: I think he was playing polo out where (Fred) Daley (has his Mokulē'ia polo field), I don't know, but it was during a polo game that he landed on his head. So that left Tenney Tongg, his sons to carry on.

Well, like I say, there was Louis Stevens, who used to be vice-president of the Bank of Hawai'i, who actually got me to go to work for the bank.

MM: When was this?

WC: Oh, 1938.

MM: Bank of Hawai'i?

WC: Yep. Then when I had a chance to buy a piece of property that went from Kalākaua Avenue back to Kiele Street--two houses that were designed by [C.W.] Dickey the architect, and built by him, for $22,000. He wouldn't give me a nickel's worth of dog's meat for a loan.

I said, "Louie, you're only four houses away from this place. What do you think your place is worth?"

"Oh, that's different. But we're not loaning money!"

I said, "Why not? The damn war [World War II] is almost over?" I said, "I'll never get a buy like this." Two big houses! Beautiful!

Nope, I'll remember that. Well, one of them sold for, at that time, two years later, about $70,000. That's only one.

MM: You were not living in Waikīkī during the war [World War II] though?

WC: No, I had volunteered for duty in 1940, (a year) before the war started. I was sent out to Fort Kam [Kamehameha]. We were living over at He'eia then moved on the post (six months before the attack on Pearl Harbor). But I could see trouble coming so I extended for another year.

When that happened, my wife went back to live with my parents at Kalākaua. She became the secretary to General Burgin who was the south sector commanding officer which divided (O'ahu) in half--south sector, north sector.

General Burgin was the head guy [of the south sector]. His chief of staff was an old friend from Fort Kam [Kamehameha], Russ Bates. We used to party up. As a matter of fact, Russ Bates was on this bachelor officer quarters deal. He was a lieutenant-colonel then.

Well, anyway, so when Burgin wanted a secretary, Bates knew my wife. He said, "Would you be interested in working for the general?" And my wife said, "Fine, it's better than working for the bank!" You see, she (had) opened up the Bank of Hawai'i, Waikīkī branch. As a matter of fact, we have the oldest account in the Bank of Hawai'i, number two. The first one was Clarkie Chappin who beat us to the thing. But he died, so our account, number two is the oldest.

So Russ introduced her to the General. She was good on shorthand. She could type. Well organized. She became the general's girl Friday. You know, she kept his appointments and everything. He thought a lot of her.

They would ask me too, both of us, up to his place. He took over the Fagin property at Diamond Head and he'd have Sunday dinners up there and we'd go up there. So I knew the old man pretty well. She stayed at Kalākaua Avenue with the folks. I was out at Fort Kam.

MM: What were you doing there?

WC: I was running a supply area. It was a 10th Quartermaster's Supply Area. I supplied all the troops from the airport, Rogers Airport up to Hickam Field. Then when they opened this one down here at Kahuku to supply Kualoa Airport all the way to Hale'iwa, I got the job.

They told me, "Okay, you move your people out here. We'll have Fort Kam go under town or Hickam or someplace." I was then in charge of all of the supply all along this coast. They're telling you, divisions, tank companies, combat teams, the works. That's how I moved out here. Then we lived at Sunset Beach for two years. We had got this place at Lā'ie. Johnny Clark's place. But my chief clerk lived right on this corner. That's how I got to know this place.

MM: How did you get to meet your wife?

WC: We both went to work the same day at the Bank of Hawai'i. We were the orphans. We didn't know from nobody. So we were assigned to Charlie "Fat" Fernandez. So he showed us around, told us what to do, how to do it, when to do it. He was sort of the father figure in the bank. So we were put together quite a bit. Misery likes company so (after work) I invited her out to the Young Hotel, danced. Upstairs they'd just opened the dance roof garden. Good wahine. She (had) the right attitude that I liked. I said, "Hey, you better get serious about this one."

MM: What was her name?

WC: May Nelson. Her father came down from, I don't know, some damn place. Minnesota, I guess. That's where his family came from. Her mother's side, oh, they been down on the islands for years

and years and years. So she was born up in Hilo. Like I was telling my brother, "You marry these Janes from the Mainland, boy, you going to get into trouble. Marry home cooking!" (Laughs) So I have one wife and he's had five!

(Laughter)

MM: Your brother?

WC: (Yep.)

MM: Before the war [World War II] started, where were you living?

WC: Oh, we were living in He'eia. You know, the big fishpond down here, that long bridge? Just where the fishpond comes in on the Kāne'ohe side of the bridge. You went down on a little riggedy [i.e., rickety] road, had a house right on the water. It was good living.

MM: How much did you pay in rent?

WC: The rent we were paying around, I think forty bucks a month. We decided to get married when both of our salaries went over $200 combined. The bank was a lousy paying organization in those days. About $200 bucks, we bought a car. We lived, I think, pretty well. You young mutts, you don't know what extravagance is. So the big deal used to be, Saturday night, we'd go to the Kāne'ohe Theatre and eat laulau and poi at Honey's Cafe.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 13-49-1-85; SIDE ONE

WC: [Honey's Cafe], that's where Don Ho was beginning to sing and polish up his act and stuff. We used to go and sit there and drink beer and listen to him. I remember Honey's Cafe because for twenty-five cents you get a laulau, a bowl of poi, Hawaiian salt and onion. Eat that, you brought your own beer if you wanted and you walked down the street and you went to Kāne'ohe Theatre. But if you went barefeet oh, boy, the crack seed and the pine nut seed shells all over the damn place, stick to your feet!

MM: What did you do after the war [World War II]?

WC: I stopped by the bank to let them know I was still alive. I was offered my old job back, which was a teller. I asked what the pay was. I think it was a terrific sum of $170 then. I told the bank people, "Thank you very much but no thank you!"

So then my brother and I went into business. He had started this business during the war and he had built it up. Then (I) got into it. We got into liquor. We had scotch from Scotland and the

best Kentucky bourbon, sour mash, but we didn't have the straights and the blends or the gin and stuff like that. We were supposed to have been given Frankfort Distillers but (it) never worked out.

MM: But you weren't strictly liquor distributors. You were food brokers.

WC: Oh, we were food brokers. We used that as a sort of springboard but we could see the change coming up. Actually, we were in the drygoods business--rags. Manhattan shirts, shoes, socks, undershorts, belts.

Then we got the Andrew Jergens line of cosmetics and Jergens (lotion). And that was a big seller down here. We could see the drygoods business, the white shirts were going out. Aloha shirts coming in. The hell with it. So we just kept moving over into groceries. Then groceries really became a big thrust.

MM: Was there like a big need for different food items at that time?

WC: Yeah, but you see, the people in those days they're still buying brands. Now, they're more sophisticated. They know that a green bean is a green bean. Who puts it up really doesn't (interest them). They'll try one that they don't know the label but if the product is good, they'll go back and buy it.

In those days, Libby, Del Monte, Lindsey olives, tomato oval [can] sardines was just one brand and that brand was Del Monte. S&W salmon that was the salmon to buy. Oh, boy, they were eating labels! Best Foods mayonnaise, that's the only one. Campbell's soup that's it. Carnation milk.

Nowadays, the people [are] better educated, more sophisticated. They're not eating a label. They buying a product now. So this is why all these brands that come out, private labels of say, you take Safeway's brand. It's good merchandise, nothing wrong with it.

The various grocery chains like Certified Grocers they have their own brand. I think it's Springfield or something like that. Now, people are buying what's in the can. If it's good, if it's cheaper they go back to it and buy it. Before there was only one corned beef, that was Libby's. If you didn't have a red and black can, nobody bought it. The same company could have made it and put it under Libby's brand and then put it under some other label and nobody would buy that other label.

MM: Could you explain about these generic foods that are coming out?

WC: Well, generic foods are okay except for one thing. You are never sure of the grade. Now they have various grades. They have fancy. They have commercial. They don't tell you what the grade of merchandise is. Now that would allow it to change quite a bit.

But one thing with a generic brand, you are not paying the cost of advertising. The cost of advertising is very considerable in the budget considerations of a well-known brand because somebody's gotta pay those millions of dollars. It comes out of your pocket.

But the only thing that I say on generic is that you're going to get some food, and it is going to be as nourishing as a label brand. Because when you order say, a canned meat item, when you order meat and if it had so much meat and then so much filler, all companies put filler in, your protein is going to be exactly the same whether it is a generic brand or a label brand, okay?

But the generic brand may be a little mushy, may be a little softer, might not have quite the taste content but you're gonna get your protein. (Laughs) That's the only thing.

Generic brands, many of them are quite good because they cannot afford, really, to put up a bad product because the guy that buys it from Company X that has produced it, if he got a lousy bunch of merchandise, he's not gonna buy Brand X anymore, I mean, from Company X.

'Cause a lot of people put it up, so competition is going to force them into kinda policing themselves. It's just as simple as that. As a matter of fact, I've tried generic peanut butter. It's just as good as Skippy. If it is not homogenized you're gonna get an oil separation. If it says, "homogenized" you won't. So little simple things like that, you can save a hell of a lot of money in generic brands.

MM: What are some of the things that you've gotten into as a food broker?

WC: Oh, boy, we tried bringing in oysters from Australia and these were beautiful oysters. We couldn't get it past the Board of Health. Mr. George Akau said, "No way! We can't tell that this is not full of coliform bacteria." These damn oysters were picked up off rocks where there's free-flowing water. Sometimes, they're a hell of a lot better than some of these quiet waters, you know, where the waste products can settle down.

Because I've tried some oysters, jar oysters from the Northwest, and I got hell of a case of salmonella out of it. Didn't know what the hell hit me until I went up to the hospital and said, "Hey, what's the matter with me?" They took a test and they said, "You're loaded with salmonella!" I said, "How do I get rid of it?" They say, "Boy, get on these pills and start taking them right away. Do it for another week or ten days. We'll take another test and it isn't gone by then, you're back on them again." But it's very debilitating. Okay, that's an American product but (those) Australian oysters, (they were) beautiful. Okay, that's one item.

Another item that we wanted to bring in was this frozen milk.

No way! We were up against the milk trust then. It took Safeway to crack the deal. Well, they have a lot of bucks. Craw brothers didn't have that type of bucks to make a big federal case.

You see, if you're Safeway and you want to do something and you been giving all these newspapers hundreds of thousands of dollars of ads every year, they're gonna tell the story. But if you're Joe Blow, "Well, how interesting, we don't know if we want to get into the controversy." Because they got fish to fry with the other government agencies.

So they all interact, and no use tilting windmills so we let the damn thing die.

MM: So, no frozen milk.

WC: No frozen milk.

MM: Where were you gonna bring those in from anyway?

WC: Mainland. Because we had, being in the food brokerage business, we have principals who are large principals. I mean, they're supplying the entire country with a brand. They get to know each other.

Like the A.E. Stailley Company. It and the corn products company are the biggest processors of corn. They make these Sta-Puff starches for commercial uses. One is a, you know, fluff up your laundry. They make MSG [monosodium glutamate] in bulk! They're in everything. They sell their corn by the carload. Okay, that's one.

The other is the StarKist Tuna. They're known in the fish business all across. They go to conventions. They meet people. If it's an interesting product. They back you up. You do a job for them, they back you up.

Like you take Lea & Perrins, Worcestershire sauce. Everybody knows it, king of the mountain. McIlhenny Company, Tabasco. You know, people like that when they give you a recommendation, manufacturers, give it an awful lot of sincere thought. That's how you build your lines but you gotta do a good job.

MM: Did you ever concentrate on foods from the Orient?

WC: No, we did not. Because it's a specialized thing. We knew the American foods. We did not know Oriental foods. Oh, sure, we like shōyu. Kikkoman was a big name. But how about, the various types of Oriental foods that are packed.

You see, we had no experience out in Japan. Who's the big packers, who are not, who puts out the best product. When you are fiddling around with that you got an awful lot to learn and not too much

time in which to learn.

So you take the boys who are in it. They are very familiar with those foods because they've dealt with it, handled it, talk it, know it, so we figured we couldn't swim it.

MM: At the time, right after the war, there was still large Japanese, Filipino, Chinese populations in Hawai'i. Have you ever tried to supply them with particular foods?

WC: No, what we wanted to do was to represent the food items out in the Orient, American food items. But you run into a highly protectionist situation. Just like the American car manufacturers and electronic people having such a hard time in getting into Japan. Not unless they want you in, are you going to do it. Or knowing the people over a long period of time. No way.

MM: Let's see, you stayed in Mānoa, was it? Right after the war [World War II]?

WC: Yeah, yeah, we were up in Punahou Street for about two years. Right across from that little park on Punahou and Wilder. Great big open house.

MM: What made you folks return to Waikīkī at the time?

WC: Well, my father had died, and my mother didn't want to live by herself. So she asked my wife and I if we would think of moving back with her. She said she could fix up the downstairs for herself, and we could have the top two floors. That way she had her own privacy and we had ours. So we worked things out.

MM: And what year was this around?

WC: Oh, I would say it was about '53, I think.

MM: Did you find Waikīkī greatly changed?

WC: Holy mackerel! They were really starting to build. Oh, boy, new hotels were starting to come up like the Biltmore. That's where Canlis had his broiler [restaurant]. That [Biltmore Hotel] was one of the first hotels to go up. Then the [Moana] Surfrider starting going up. Princess Ka'iulani [Hotel], the Hilton Hawaiian Village. The individual apartment houses were springing up like a blight! Hell, they were all coming up! It was a golden age for construction in Hawai'i. So of course, land values escalated. Everybody became a carpenter, a plasterer, a plumber, an electrician. And they made damn good money!

MM: Whatever became of the old Stonewall Gang?

WC: Oh, they dispersed during the war [World War II]. Some had gotten into the army, others had jobs, you know. They're no longer young

mutts, why, they're more responsible. So that kind of cooled it off. About the only bunch that really remained together as a unit was the Hui Nalu, the beach boys.

MM: Hui Nalu beach boys?

WC: Yeah, and then they formed with the Outrigger [Canoe Club]. They formed the Waikīkī Beach Patrol--to put an organization in. So those fellows who stuck with it, you know, went until they no longer could be beach boys--that life was too strenuous.

MM: What's your definition of a beach boy?

WC: Well, a beach boy, the beach boy types that I knew of, the guy was normally a very gentlemanly type. He might have been an uneducated mutt but he had innate good sense of conduct.

Okay, he took care of the tourists. He took them surfing. He took them canoeing. He taught the kids to swim. He taught the kids how to surf. His free time, he would spend with them. Many of the guys, when these families would come back, they would ask or write to them and let them know that they are coming back.

In those days, tourism was great in that people would come down for a couple of months. Ship their cars and come down and be here, so you had a built-in clientele of people that was always rotating.

If a whole bunch came in, fine and dandy, they knew that you were taking care of these people and you made your appointments to take out surfing lessons.

In the evening, if the family wanted to go someplace or there was a luau that you knew about, you took 'em. It was sort of a reciprocal deal. Largely, the families paid for most everything.

When they left, you were not only paid for your services on the beach, lessons and stuff but when they'd leave, they'd give you very large, handsome tips, good tips. And on boat days, it was not uncommon for some of the beach boys to collect from several hundred dollars, to over a thousand [dollars], from the people who were leaving.

You don't see that anymore. These monkeys, they don't know how to act. They think they're Tarzans. They're not humble. They don't play low key. I watched some of these mutts. Christ, in those days, they would run them off the beach. "Get out, we don't need you. You giving us a bad name!" Now there's no standard that I can see.

MM: But in your opinion then, has maybe the type of tourist who come to Hawai'i . . .

WC: That's changed too. That's changed. They're on a budget. So the best you can do is put them on a canoe and take them out, catch three waves and dump 'em.

So there is not the example that the guys in the old days would be given. Like, I mean these people are real nice. They behave very nice towards people and the beach boys responded in kind. They observed. They are not stupid, they observe. So they patterned their actions because they could recognize class.

Like you say, the new type of tourist down here. You got what a million? Hey, boy, oh boy, the best thing you can do is pile 'em all on a bus and take them out to the [Polynesian] Cultural Center and sit 'em down.

No, they're on a budget. They don't have the time to sit around and talk and learn by, give lessons, by example. Now you take some of these beach boys from the olden times, sure they can be real kolohe if they wanted to, but they were real gentlemen. The families would feel very secure. I don't know, that's just my observations.

But I've been down to the beach and I look at the so-called "beach boy" and not so good.

MM: Did you ever consider yourself as having been a beach boy?

WC: Yeah, yeah, but I was pretty well educated! My mother taught me an awful lot before I got on the beach. (Laughs) But just taking out canoe lessons, swimming lessons, surfboards, I used to date the gals my own age but I had my own girlfriend, you know. So it was sort of, I figured it was kinda like a job. A more pleasant job than working in the pineapple cannery, which I had done, I'd worked for the newspaper. The damn newspaper still owes me money!

MM: Which newspaper was this?

WC: Advertiser. Yeah, I was writing sports stories for them. Asses, they never paid me my last wage.

MM: Well, I think I better wrap it up now.

WC: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985:
ORAL HISTORIES

Volume I

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i-Mānoa

June 1985